

After the placements of needles in her legs along the gall bladder meridian and bladder meridian, the patient obtained instant relief of leg pains and on recheck two months later was still free of pain.

Case 3.—A 54-year-old male physician who had longstanding bilateral osteoarthritis of the hip and had pain down both hips and legs received the needle treatment. Definite relief of pain was felt after this procedure. The patient was admonished, however, that ten to fifteen such treatments would be necessary to obtain continuous relief of pain in this condition.

With the success in two out of three cases, the San Francisco Medical Society and the University of California, San Francisco, have opened the eyes of the Western practitioner to the possibility of adding a new kind of procedure to his armamentarium for the treatment of disease.

The University of California, San Francisco, had a follow-up session at the San Francisco General Hospital ten days later in which the Radiology Department and the Anesthesiology Department did some basic studies on patients receiving the needling procedures. Four patients who received acupuncture treatment were relieved of pain or had some measure of increased mobility.

Assemblymen Gordon W. Duffy, Robert Morretti and Robert Monagan have introduced AB 1500 in order to permit medical schools to engage in scientific research and evaluation of acupuncture and other forms of traditional Chinese medicine. This legislation will have CMA endorsement and support. Assemblyman Duffy reconfirms this author's feeling that scientific investigation should be conducted in our medical schools to determine the validity of this type of practice.

A Letter on Acupuncture

Considerable nationwide publicity was given to a report that Thomas N. Elmendorf, M.D., President-elect of the California Medical Association, was relieved of pain following an acupuncture

treatment at a meeting of the San Francisco Medical Society on May 9, 1972. Dr. Elmendorf has since received many letters of inquiry. For the information of its readers CALIFORNIA MEDICINE publishes herewith a sample of the letter which Dr. Elmendorf has used in responding to these inquiries.

Dear _____:

I am pleased to reply to your letter with regard to acupuncture and my experiences with it.

Here are the facts—

On May 9, two Chinese physicians placed two acupuncture needles along my lower right spine, one over my right hip and one just below my right knee on the outside of the upper leg. Some moxibustion was applied in the area of the right hip (moxibustion is the application of heat in various ways). The entire procedure took about 15 minutes and was relatively painless. I experienced a little deep pain with the application of the needle in the thigh and in the upper leg; however, only a small sharp pin-like sensation was felt along the lower spine.

When I arose from the table, the pain in my right hip was almost completely relieved. I was able to bear weight with hardly any pain. However, I am sorry to report to you that the relief of the pain lasted for only one hour. Following that, I was able to walk better for about two days, with less pain. After that period of time, my condition and pain have returned to the same level that existed prior to the acupuncture treatment.

Both of the Chinese physicians believe that they can cure my arthritis, which exists in both hips, with 10 to 15 acupuncture treatments. By "cure" they mean relief of pain and associated muscle spasms: they both deny that they can change the radiological picture of my arthritis. Both physicians have requested that I not give their names or addresses.

The problem is simply this. Acupuncture itself is a procedure in which the skin is penetrated, and as such must qualify as a medical, or perhaps, even surgical procedure. The Chinese physicians do not have licenses to practice medicine in the State of California or for that matter, anywhere in the United States or North America. Therefore, they are not licensed to perform acupuncture here, although acupuncture is not in itself illegal. A physician who had a license to

practice medicine and surgery in the State of California, or in any of the states, who learned the procedure of acupuncture and wished to use it in his practice, could legally do so as long as he observed the ordinary prudence required of all medical practice.

I personally believe that acupuncture has some potential as a technique to relieve pain or even, perhaps, to induce anesthesia for surgical procedures. The truth of the matter is that Western medicine knows very little about acupuncture, and I believe that we should attempt to learn about it. Accordingly, university medical centers are being encouraged to attempt a scientific evaluation of acupuncture treatment. It may even be possible that enabling legislation will be required; however, we are exploring the situation in depth, and no doubt you will be reading more about it in the not too distant future.

I want to make it perfectly clear, that I do not endorse acupuncture at this time. I am sorry that some of the newspaper articles gave this impression.

It is only fair to report to you that a Chinese nurse, also part of the demonstration and who was reported to have had multiple disc disease with two surgeries, tells me that she has had complete relief of her pain for a period of four weeks.

I am immensely pleased that the medical profession here in California has such an open-minded attitude regarding this technique, about which we know very little; nor do we understand the traditional methods of Chinese medical practice.

I should mention that there are no physicians' names that I can give to you in the United States who practice acupuncture, although I have heard rumors that there are such physicians in Los Angeles, New York and Philadelphia. I want to re-emphasize that this is rumor only.

My heart goes out to you, because I cannot do more for you; but if there is any value to the acupuncture treatment, we intend to find out.

THOMAS ELMENDORF, M.D.

Refer to: Waldron WG: The entomologist and illusions of parasitosis (Information). Calif Med 117:76-78, Aug 1972

The Entomologist and Illusions of Parasitosis

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The author has been involved in many cases where small to large groups of people in office buildings have said that they were being "bitten" by insects. Subsequent entomological investigations often rule out the presence of biting arthropods as the causative agent. This condition was recently identified for me by the local psychiatric profession as illusions of parasitosis, a phrase which encompasses many environmental and emotional factors. Unlike delusions of parasitosis, which usually affects one person or a family,^{1,2} illusions of parasitosis can be evidenced by a heterogeneous group, with as many as 150 people believing that they are being "bitten" or "will be bitten." The unfortunate result of this is a sharp decrease in office efficiency and morale. In most cases, the condition is restricted to women employees. If there is a man in the office, he may grudgingly agree that there is a problem, but usually he is not affected. The people involved will often seek the help of a physician. As with delusions of parasitosis, there may be a "triggering" arthropod such as a flea infestation at home, or thrips in a bouquet of flowers. The person affected may then associate those bites with a situation at the office and transpose the problem from one environment to another. The itching is very readily transmitted to other employees, possibly by discussion, example, suggestion, or awareness. They in turn associate it with their own personal office problems. Those affected may greatly exaggerate their condition to draw attention from a supervisor.

Many times, sympathetic or efficiency-minded supervisors will employ a pest control operator

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